RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 4th May, 1987/14 Vaisakha 1909 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Soviet offer for developing coal mining projects

*241. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Soviet Union has offered to cooperate with India for developing 15 coal mining projects; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 15 coal mining projects in India have been identified during the various meetings of the Indo-Soviet Working Group on Coal for complete development with Soviet assistance.

Details of projects are given in the Statement laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Details of 15 coal mining projects are as under:

Sl. No.	Name of project	Name of the company	Location
1	Jhanjra underground project	Eastern Coalfields Limited	West Bengal
2	Khadia opencast project	Northern Coalfields Limited	UP/MP
3	Mukunda opencast project with washeries	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	Bihar
4	Nigahi opencast project	Northern Coalfields Limited	M.P.
5	Kumari opencast project	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	Bihar
6	Moher opencast project	Northern Coalfields Limited	M.P.
7	Sitanala underground project	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	Bihar
8	[illegible]	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	[illegible]
9	Kapuria underground project	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	[illegible]
10	Parbatpur underground project	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	Bihar
	Integrated Kharkharee Dharmaband underground project	Bharat Coking Coal Limited	Bihar
12	Barmondia underground project	Eastern Coalfields Limited	West Bengal
13	Dakhinkhanda underground project	Eastern Coalfields Limited	West Bengal
14	Sripur (Tailtore Seam)	Eastern Coalfields Limited	West Bengal
15	Parkasham Khani I & II underground project (Reconstruction)	Singareni Collieries Company Limitd	[illegible]

NOTE :- In addition to above mentioned 15 coal m[illegible]ects, Soviet Union is assisting in modernisation of Patherdih Washery.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank the Minister for the collaborations entered into with the Soviet Union for opening 15 new coal fields. While congratulating him, let me draw his attention to the fact that there is a large deposit of high grade coal in Bankura and Birbhum. As the experts say, it is said that it is an extension of high grade Raniganj seam coal which supplies coal to thermal power plants, railways and steel mills and all that. And the experts also say that it is necessary to undergo open-casting method and the Soviet Union is a leading expert in this particular open-casting method. Therefore, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he will be exploring the possibility of extending this Indo-Soviet collaboration in the sector of coal for exploitation of high-grade coal in Bankura and Birbhum and also moderate type of coal available in the Darjeeling district.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, apart from these 15 projects if there is any area which can be explored and found suitable in the survey there is nothing to debar us from going in for new areas as well. These 15 projects themselves when completed will give about 76 million tonnes of coal. But we cannot shut out any additionality, if there is prospect for getting coal.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, we are particularly discussing the Indo-Soviet collaboration in coal. My point is that the Minister is definitely aware of the condition of the existing coal mines, particularly in the Raniganj sector because accidents have been rising. There have been complaints of unscientific method of mining and also there have been complaints that safety regulations are not being carried out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question not relevant. Please look at the question.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, my question is whether the Government is aware of the problems of Raniganj and would seek Soviet help to modernise Raniganj coal sector.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, in the agreement we have discussed that the working group is a continuous arrangement. Every year once there, once here, we meet and decide about what we should do. As basic arrangement of the working group in the programme the following decisions were taken. A programme of co-operation between the Soviet Union and India in the coal sector by 2000 A.D. was drawn up between the two countries. This programme included development of 15 coal fields and also Pathadi washery. It was also agreed that co-operation in respect of all projects would be on a total basis including designing, construction and final implementation and we will take care to see in the implementation that it is done scientifically and there is no room left for any accidents or fatalities.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: We all know that Coal India Limited is the largest public sector undertaking in the country. Some time ago, Chari Committee was appointed to go into the functioning of the Eastern Coalfields and they identified 22 coalmines as being utterly uneconomical. The idea of uneconomical functioning would have been taken from the Tara collieries where the cost of production was Rs. 1448 per tonne while the selling price was Rs. 180- per tonne. My question relates to the norms governing the selection of these coalfields because some of the worst possible coalfields listed in the Chari Committee report are not mentioned in the list given here.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The question related to 15 coalfields that were mutually selected by the Soviet Union and us. I generally agree that if coalmine is uneconomical, it should not be worked. But then there are other aspects also which we have to consider, particularly the question of retrenchment etc., and that is why

some time we continue to operate these mines.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: There are many accidents generally which are reported, with a huge death toll. Will the hon. Minister take help from the Soviet Union or other sources to see that workers' lives are protected and there is safety in the coalmines?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you take any assistance from the Soviet Union —any technical assistance?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have already said that technical assistance will be there to see that mining operations are such that accidents do not take place.

श्री शंकर सिंह वाघेला : माननीय सोवियत संघ के अलावा कोयला खान परियोजना के लिए क्या किसी का प्रोपोजल भी हमारे पास आया है ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Separate question should be put.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Collaboration with the Soviet Union in respect of coal pertains to 15 items given in the list, which is welcome step, because that is a rupee trade area. I want to know one thing We are as well dealing with other countries where foreign exchange is involved, both in terms of taking loans and also for repayments. My specific question is how the Minister has experienced with these two different aspects, namely, collaboration with the Soviet Union in coalmining where rupee exchange is involved, and other countries where foreign exchange is involved.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We have not made any comparison of various collaborations in terms of evaluating it; but we satisfied with the Soviet collaboration.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Sir, hon. Minister may kindly inform us if this Indo-Soviet cooperation is also extended to non-conventional area of coalmines. We have learnt of these endemic diseases in the coalmining area etc., like mafia menace etc. Will this collaboration also be extended to non-conventional areas in coalmines?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: What is the non-conventional area?

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Bihar belt, for instance.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I had in mind non-conventional energy, etc. Probably, you mean other areas. Well, wherever there is coal, and if it is economically possible, we will not hesitate to take Soviet cooperation in getting to that area also.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Hon. Minister in his reply said that a survey is going on to identify further areas of cooperation. I want to know in which area survey is going on and when do we get a final picture.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: This is a continuous process. For example there is the Southern coal-fields areas in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am talking about Southern areas.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: That is known at present. There is Singrauli belt. This is a continuous process and wherever we can find coal and be able to excavate it economically, then the next stage of collaboration comes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

*242. [*The questioner (Shri Suresh Pachouri) was absent for answer,* vide *cols.* 36-37. *infra*]